



Servicio

Ten Years of Operation

of the

Bilateral Health Programs

of the

Institute of Inter-American Affairs

Excerpts from an evaluation survey
by the Public Health Service, 1953

PUBLIC LAW 369 of the 80th Congress provided that the purposes of the Institute of Inter-American Affairs "are to further the general welfare of, and to strengthen friendship and understanding among, the peoples of the American Republics through collaboration with other governments . . . in planning, initiating, assisting, financing, administering, and executing technical programs and projects, especially in the fields of public health, sanitation, agriculture, and education."

This Congressional enactment in itself recognized the contributions to hemispheric security and well-being which had come from the Institute's activities since its creation in 1942 as a corporate entity under authority granted to the then Coordinator of Inter-

American Affairs. During 1952, following upon a suggestion first advanced in 1950 by the Institute, the Public Health Service undertook to evaluate the bilateral health programs which had been developed with our good neighbors during the previous decade.

Public Health Reports publishes in this and succeeding issues excerpts from the findings and conclusions of this survey. The portions have been selected as being of major interest to professional persons in the fields of public health in three respects: first, for their intrinsic factual value as a report of an international technical assistance program; second, as a "case report" of a technical field evaluation of public health practice; and, as a review of current concepts of public health administration.

. . . from the Surgeon General's

FOREWORD

The fifth decade of this century witnessed some extraordinary advances in international collaboration in the field of public health. Although these advances were partly due to the urgencies of World War II, they have continued into this decade. There is reason to think that, when the history of these troubled times is finally written, the careful historian will see in the emergence of the cooperative health programs in Latin America a significant development in the Western Hemisphere's search for higher levels of health and stability.

The translation of an underlying cooperative spirit into effective action through a joint administrative device, the *Servicio*, marks a significant experiment in international cooperation in health. A will to work together has been coupled with a way to work together in the family of nations.

Servicio Principle

The *Servicio*, as an administrative device, has stood out as one of the special and characteristic features of the Institute of Inter-American Affairs program. The president of the Institute in 1951 described *Servicio* as:

“. . . the generic name of the administrative device through which the Institute works with the other American Republics in the execution of technical assistance or basic economic development programs. The Spanish word "*Servicio*" means service; it is also the synonym for Government bureaus in the United States. A cooperative *Servicio* is a bureau or department of a ministry of a Latin American government, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Public Health, or Education. . . .

"Although a *Servicio* is part of a ministry, it is autonomous in many respects. Its autonomy is derived from the authority vested in the director to determine, with the concurrence of the minister, the administrative procedure to be followed by the *Servicio*. . . . The Latin American Republic is represented by the minister of the cooperating ministry, and the Institute of Inter-American Affairs is represented by the chief of field party. The Insti-

tute sends to the American Republic such technicians as are required and names as the head of the group a chief of field party. The minister and the chief of field party are co-equals in developing the administrative techniques to be followed by the *Servicio*."

The Task of Evaluation

To characterize the *Servicio* is one thing. To attempt to trace and evaluate the operation of the *Servicio* in all its multiphasic detail and significance is quite another.

The Public Health Service's report represents an initial step toward tracing and evaluating the operation of the *Servicio* in inter-American cooperative agreements. The study is the first of its kind, and is, therefore, unique. It was a shared project in which the chiefs of field party and the specialists of the evaluation team worked together in the field and later around a conference table in Washington. Their aim throughout, through the process of give and take in frank discussion, was to reach a consensus on the final report. Although time limitations prevented gathering the ideal amount of survey data, the report as a whole gives a picture of the program and sets out some guideposts. Incomplete as the study may be, it can serve as a springboard for further accomplishment in international cooperation for the advancement of health.

LEONARD A. SCHEELE, M.D.

. . . from the IIAA President's

INTRODUCTION

During the decade 1942-52 many factors gave impetus to the widespread development of public health throughout the Americas. In light of the importance of public health promotion on a worldwide basis, it seemed important to make some estimate of the values inherent in the joint programs of the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, and to determine somehow, if at all possible, the particular merits of the techniques used and the value and effectiveness of programs focused, as these were, at certain defined areas of health development. It was considered necessary that the facts at least be placed in the open for others to study.